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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 ROME 005058

SIPDIS

FROM U.S. MISSION IN ROME

AMEMBASSY HARARE FOR AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN AND USAID DIRECTOR
USAID/W FOR ADMINISTRATOR NATSIOS, AA/DCHA WINTER,
UNCLASSIFIED

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DCHA/D/FFP LANDIS, USAID/GLOBAL/HEALTH
STATE FOR P U/S GROSSMAN, E U/S LARSON, IO ACTING A/S WOOD,
A/S PRM DEWEY, A/S AFR KANSTEINER, AFR/SA
USDA/FAS FOR U/S PENN AND RTILSWORTH
USDA/FAS PRETORIA FOR RHELM
NSC FOR JWORKEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR TONY P. HALL IN ZIMBABWE - "NO FAMINE -
YET. A MAJOR HUMANITARIAN DISASTER ON THE HORIZON."
REF: (A) HARARE 2211, (B) HARARE 2214

SUMMARY

¶1. A TEAM LED BY AMBASSADOR TONY HALL VISITED ZIMBABWE
OCTOBER 08-11 AND FOUND ZIMBABWE SLOUCHING TOWARD A MAJOR
HUMANITARIAN DISASTER. NEARLY HALF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION
IS NOW CLASSIFIED BY THE UN AS SERIOUSLY FOOD INSECURE (6.7
MILLION). WHILE EXACERBATED BY SUB-NORMAL RAINFALL THIS
YEAR, THE ALARMING FOOD SHORTFALL IS MAN-MADE - EMANATING
FROM THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT
OF ZIMBABWE (GOZ). BIOTECH MAIZE, GOZ "IMPEDIMENTS" IMPOSED
ON FOOD IMPORTS AND NGO REGISTRATION - WERE HIGHLIGHTED.
AMBASSADOR HALL HIGHLIGHTED THE FACT THAT AMERICA IS A
GENEROUS AND COMPASSIONATE NATION THAT PROVIDED SIGNIFICANT
ASSISTANCE TO ZIMBABWE DURING THE 1991/1992 "WORST DROUGHT
OF THE CENTURY" - AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE LEAD DONOR TO
THE PRESENT CRISIS. "WHILE WE DISAGREE WITH THE POLICIES OF
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THIS GOVERNMENT, WE CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY
AND ARE GUIDED BY FORMER PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PHILOSOPHY THAT
'A HUNGRY CHILD KNOWS NO POLITICS.'" END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND - "IF YOU BURN A HOUSE, CAN YOU HIDE THE SMOKE?"
- AFRICAN PROVERB

¶2. AMBASSADOR TONY HALL, US MISSION TO ROME; HUMANITARIAN
ATTACHE TIM LAVELLE; SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE AMBASSADOR MAX
FINBERG; AND USDA/FAS PRETORIA AGRICULTURAL COUNSELOR RICK
HELM, VISITED ZIMBABWE OCTOBER 08-11. IN ADDITION TO
MEETINGS IN HARARE WITH U.S. EMBASSY, UN AND GOZ
FUNCTIONARIES, THE TEAM SPENT TWO DAYS IN RURAL AND PERI-
URBAN AREAS REVIEWING UN AND NGO RELIEF OPERATIONS.

¶3. SINCE 1997, ZIMBABWE HAS BEEN EXPERIENCING AN ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL CRISIS INDUCED BY DECLINING PRICES FOR ITS KEY
EXPORTS AND POOR ECONOMIC POLICIES, AND HEIGHTENED BY A
DECREASE IN TOBACCO EXPORTS FOLLOWING FARM INVASIONS,
INCREASED FISCAL DEFICIT, AND LOSS OF INVESTOR CONFIDENCE
ARISING FROM UNCERTAINTY ABOUT DOMESTIC POLICIES. FOREIGN
DIRECT INVESTMENT HAS DROPPED FROM USD \$444 MILLION IN 1998
TO \$3 MILLION (EST.) IN 2002. OVER THIS PERIOD, REAL GDP HAS
GONE DOWN BY 35 PERCENT. SOURCES ESTIMATE THE UNEMPLOYMENT
RATE AS HIGH AS 70 PERCENT. IN SHORT, THE ECONOMY IS
IMPLoding FROM SELF-INFLECTED WOUNDS.

¶4. THE FOOD SUPPLY SITUATION GIVES SERIOUS CAUSE FOR
CONCERN. THE 2002 MAIZE CROP (THE BASIC STAPLE) HARVEST IS
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ESTIMATED AT ONLY ONE-FOURTH THE NORMAL LEVEL OF 2000. THE
GOZ MAINTAINS A RIGID MONOPOLY ON GRAIN IMPORTS AND
UNREALISTIC PRICE CONTROLS ON STAPLE FOODS (WHICH
EFFECTIVELY MARGINALIZE THE PRIVATE SECTOR). ACCORDING TO
THE UNDP, 8.6 MILLION HECTARES WERE USED IN AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTION IN 2000. NOW IT IS LESS THAN 1 MILLION HECTARES.
A RECENT VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICA
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC), IN COLLABORATION WITH UN
AGENCIES, HAS REVISED THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN NEED OF FOOD
ASSISTANCE FROM SIX MILLION ESTIMATED BY THE FAO/WFP IN MAY
2002, TO 6.7 MILLION. THIS REPRESENTS ABOUT HALF THE
POPULATION.

SOBERING DATA RELATED TO HEALTH

¶5. ZIMBABWE HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST RATES OF HIV/AIDS
INFECTION IN THE WORLD, WITH 1.5 MILLION PEOPLE LIVING WITH

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ACTION SSO-00

INFO	LOG-00	AF-00	AID-00	ANHR-00	E-00	UTED-00	TEDE-00
	IO-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	P-00	SS-00	TEST-00	PRM-00

SAS-00 /002W
-----F8FA09 171027Z /38

P 170920Z OCT 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO AMEMBASSY HARARE PRIORITY
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6365
USDA FAS WASHDC PRIORITY 2331
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
USEU BRUSSELS 2847
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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YET. A MAJOR HUMANITARIAN DISASTER ON THE HORIZON."
AIDS AND AT LEAST ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR PEOPLE HAVING HIV.
IT IS ESTIMATED THAT MORE THAN 2,000 PEOPLE A WEEK ARE DYING
FROM COMPLICATIONS DUE TO AIDS. TODAY THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED
900,000 ORPHANS - TRAGICALLY, THIS NUMBER WILL ONLY GROW.
THE NUMBER OF ORPHANS ALONE WAS OVERWHELMING. ONE OF THE
LINKS BETWEEN THE FOOD CRISIS AND THE AIDS EPIDEMIC IS THAT
WOMEN ARE SELLING SEX FOR FOOD. A LOCAL NGO INTRODUCED US
TO ROSEMARY, A 12-YEAR OLD AIDS ORPHAN WHO HAD LOST BOTH
PARENTS AND WAS HIV-POSITIVE HERSELF. SHE APPEARED SIX
BECAUSE OF STUNTING AND WAS LOSING BOTH HER SIGHT AND
HEARING.

16. MALARIA AFFECTS ABOUT ONE MILLION PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE A
YEAR, WITH AN ESTIMATED 116,000 DEATHS ANNUALLY ATTRIBUTABLE
TO THE DISEASE. A RECENT CHOLERA OUTBREAK IS NOW REPORTED
UNDER CONTROL, ALTHOUGH THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)
REPORTED THE CASE FATALITY RATE AS THE WORST EVER RECORDED
IN THIS COUNTRY. ALSO ACCORDING TO WHO, ZIMBABWE IS AMONG
THE TWO DOZEN NATIONS WORST HIT BY THE WORLDWIDE
TUBERCULOSIS (TB) EPIDEMIC. WE SAW A TB WARD AT ST. ALBERT'S
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HOSPITAL AND ALMOST ALL OF THE MEN BEING TREATED FOR TB WERE
HIV POSITIVE.

THE INTERNALLY DISPLACED FROM THE BESIEGED COMMERCIAL
FARMING SECTOR

17. IN JANUARY 2000, THE COMMERCIAL FARMING SECTOR EMPLOYED
MORE THAN 350,000 WORKERS, ROUGHLY ONE-THIRD OF ALL WAGE
EMPLOYMENT. BY MID-2002, UP TO 1.5 MILLION EX-COMMERCIAL
FARM WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE OR SOON WILL BE IN LIFE
THREATENING CIRCUMSTANCES DUE TO FARM EXPROPRIATIONS AND
ENSUING INTIMIDATION. MANY HAVE STARTED TO MOVE SOMEWHERE,
ANYWHERE TO SURVIVE - LIVING ON LAND WITHOUT WATER OR
SANITATION, ALONG ROADS AND ON THE MARGINS OF CITIES. THE
FARM WORKERS ARE AT ODDS WITH THE GOVERNMENT FOR TWO
PRINCIPAL REASONS: (A) MOST VOTED FOR THE OPPOSITION; AND
(B) THEY WERE THE SKILLED WORK FORCE THAT KEPT THE WHITE
FARMERS IN BUSINESS. ADDITIONALLY, MANY ARE FROM NEIGHBORING
COUNTRIES. WHILE MANY HAVE RECEIVED "FORCED RETRENCHMENT"
SEVERANCE PACKAGES, THESE MONIES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO LAST
LONG, PARTICULARLY WITH RAMPANT INFLATION (CURRENTLY AT 135
PERCENT BY OFFICIAL ESTIMATES). AT PRESENT, VIRTUALLY NO
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IS REACHING "EXPELLED" FARM WORKERS.

GOZ VRS. NGOS - "A CLIMATE OF DISTRUST AND SUSPICION"

18. THE GOZ CONTINUES TO PURSUE A POLICY OF INHIBITING THE
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EFFORTS OF A NUMBER OF NGOS (INTER ALIA SAVE/UK, CATHOLIC
RELIEF SERVICES, CAFOD, OXFAM), TO PARTICIPATE IN RELIEF
DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS, ON THE GROUNDS OF ALLEGED POLITICAL
ACTIVITY. WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WITH A TARGET OF DELIVERING UP
TO 55,000 MTS/MONTH TO OVER A MILLION BENEFICIARIES IN THE
COUNTRY'S 28 DISTRICTS) HAS MANAGED TO DATE TO SIGN UP (WITH
GOVERNMENT APPROVAL) ONLY NINE INTERNATIONAL NGOS - WHICH
SERIOUSLY LIMITS ITS ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR ITS
PLANNED OPERATIONS. MANY LOCAL NGOS ALSO LABOR UNDER A CLOUD
OF GOVERNMENTAL DISTRUST.

PLAIN SPEAK - "IT IS FIVE MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT AND IT WILL BE
A VERY LONG AND DARK NIGHT, UNLESS SOMETHING MORE IS DONE"

19. IN TWO MEETINGS WITH ZIMBABWE'S MINISTER OF LABOR AND
SOCIAL WELFARE JULY MOYO AND IN AN OCTOBER 11 PRESS
CONFERENCE, AMBASSADOR HALL UNDERLINED THAT ZIMBABWE WOULD

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ACTION SSO-00

INFO LOG-00 AF-00 AID-00 ANHR-00 E-00 UTED-00 TEDE-00
IO-00 NSCE-00 OIC-02 P-00 SS-00 TEST-00 PRM-00
SAS-00 /002W

-----F8FA1E 171027Z /38

P 170920Z OCT 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO AMEMBASSY HARARE PRIORITY
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6366
USDA FAS WASHDC PRIORITY 2332
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
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USEU BRUSSELS 2848
USMISSION GENEVA
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YET. A MAJOR HUMANITARIAN DISASTER ON THE HORIZON."
FACE A MAJOR FAMINE "IF THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT CLEAR AWAY
BUREAUCRATIC ROADBLOCKS AND ALLOW MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF FOOD
(BOTH COMMERCIALY PROCURED AND FOOD AID) TO BE IMPORTED BY
THE END OF THE YEAR." "THE CRITICAL TIME IS THE NEXT TWO
MONTHS...IF BY THE END OF DECEMBER ENOUGH FOOD HASN'T
ARRIVED...THERE WILL BE STARVATION." HALL REITERATED THAT HE
HAD HEARD SPECIFIC TESTIMONY WHERE THE GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO
SELL GRAIN TO OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS AND AREAS CONSIDERED
HOTBEDS OF OPPOSITION SUPPORT. MINISTER MOYO ACKNOWLEDGED
THAT SOME PRIVATE GRAIN SHIPMENTS "HAD BEEN HELD UP FOR
POLITICAL REASONS."

OTHER KEY POINTS ENUNCIATED BY AMBASSADOR HALL:

- "THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE BEARS THE RESPONSIBILITY
FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THIS ONCE-PRODUCTIVE COUNTRY, WHICH
IS NOW Mired IN CRISIS. THE DROUGHT HAS NOT CAUSED THIS; IT
HAS ONLY COMPOUNDED THE PROBLEM;
- THE GOZ NEEDS TO CREATE THE SPACE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE NGOS AND THE CHURCHES

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TO OPERATE FREELY. THEY NEED TO BE GIVEN 'ELBOW ROOM'
INSTEAD OF BEING BOUND BY RESTRICTIONS;"

- THE UNITED STATES IS A GENEROUS COUNTRY. WE WERE HERE
DURING THE DROUGHT OF 1992 AND WE ARE HERE 10 YEARS LATER.
WHILE WE DISAGREE WITH THE POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT, WE
CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY. WE DO NOT USE FOOD AS
A WEAPON. AS OUR FORMER PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN ONCE SAID:
'A HUNGRY CHILD KNOWS NO POLITICS;'
- GOZ HAS MADE THE RIGHT DECISION TO ALLOW THE
IMPORTATION OF U.S.-DONATED BIOTECH FOODS. THIS FOOD IS
DESPERATELY NEEDED."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST KEEP UP THE "DRUM BEAT"
THAT ZIMBABWE'S GRAIN MARKETING SYSTEM NEEDS DRASTIC
REVAMPING TO ALLOW MORE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE
HANDLING AND DISTRIBUTION OF MAIZE AND OTHER STAPLE FOODS TO
INCREASE SUPPLIES, LOWER PRICES, AND ENSURE GREATER
AVAILABILITY TO THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD TO PURCHASE.

11. WFP NEEDS TO ACCELERATE ITS CEREALS FOOD AID IMPORTS TO
THE PROMISED 55,000 MTS/MONTH LEVEL. MONITORING IS PRESENTLY
INADEQUATE; WFP SHOULD LOOK AT THE POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT
IMPLEMENTATION OR SECONDING OF NGO STAFF TO WFP, IN ORDER TO
OVERCOME PROBLEMS OF NGO REGISTRATION AND LIMITED
IMPLEMENTING PARTNER CAPACITY. ALSO NEEDED IS A UN

CONTINGENCY PLAN TO ENSURE THAT FUEL IS AVAILABLE TO MOVE
HUMANITARIAN CARGOES (LACK OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE WILL RESULT
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IN A FUEL CRISIS IF LIBYA, KUWAIT AND SOUTH AFRICA REFUSE TO
EXTEND MORE CREDIT TO GOZ).

¶12. A NUTRITION SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM NEEDS TO BE PUT IN PLACE
TO TRACK TRENDS IN NUTRITIONAL STATUS, FOOD SECURITY AND
RELATED ISSUES. SPECIFIC ATTENTION MAY BE PAID TO MONITORING
THE NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE AND CRUDE
MORTALITY RATE (CMR). IN GENERAL, THERE IS A NEED TO
STRENGTHEN UN INFORMATION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS. UN IS
STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO COMMENCE POST-DISTRIBUTION
MONITORING, RAPIDLY MAKING USE OF DONOR SUPPORT. SUCH
MONITORING SHOULD DRAW FROM ZIMBABWEAN AND OTHER SOURCES AND
ITS RESULTS SHOULD BE DISSEMINATED TO DONORS AND OTHER
STAKEHOLDERS AS WELL AS TO THE UN.

¶13. WFP AND ITS NGO PARTNERS ARE ADVISED TO USE GENERAL
RELIEF FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS TO IMPART KEY MESSAGES IN HIV/AIDS
AWARENESS, HEALTH AND NUTRITION. THE CAPTIVE AUDIENCES
PRESENT AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY TO REITERATE IMPORTANT LESSONS.

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ACTION SSO-00

INFO	LOG-00	AF-00	AID-00	ANHR-00	E-00	UTED-00	TEDE-00
	IO-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	P-00	SS-00	TEST-00	PRM-00
	SAS-00	/002W					

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P 170920Z OCT 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
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SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6367
USDA FAS WASHDC PRIORITY 2333
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
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¶14. USAID SHOULD CONSIDER SIGNIFICANT FUNDING FOR THE
ZIMBABWE ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH-RELATED HOSPITALS (WHICH WORK
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY). THESE HOSPITALS, WITH TIMELY
SUPPORT, COULD RAPIDLY EXPAND THEIR OUTREACH. NOTE: THE TEAM
VISITED ST. ALBERT'S HOSPITAL IN MASHONALAND CENTRAL
PROVINCE AND WAS IMPRESSED BY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR
DEDICATED STAFF WORKING UNDER LESS THAN OPTIMUM CONDITIONS.
END NOTE.

¶15. THE UNITED STATES SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC) TO ASSUME IMPLIMENTATIONAL
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COUNTRY'S INTERNALLY DISPLACED
POPULATIONS.

¶16. WITH DOMESTIC WHEAT PRODUCTION ESTIMATED TO BE FALLING
FROM 240,000 MTS TO AN EXPECTED 100,000 MTS OR LESS THIS
YEAR, WFP MIGHT DIALOGUE WITH GOVERNMENT ON THE FEASIBILITY
OF WHEAT IMPORTS FOR SELECTED TARGETED GROUPS OR "SWAPPING"
ARRANGEMENTS.

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¶17. WITH A GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SYSTEM IN TOTAL
DISARRAY, FAO IS ADVISED TO ACCELERATE ITS LINKAGES WITH
NGOS THROUGH SPECIFIC MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING. PLANS FOR
THE SOURCING AND MOVEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS TO LOCAL
DISTRIBUTION POINTS ARE IMMEDIATELY NEEDED. WITHOUT SEEDS
AND INPUTS IN THE NEXT MONTH, THE 2003 HARVEST WILL BE
ABYSMAL.

¶18. SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING IS NEEDED FOR ALL UNDER-FIVES AND
PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN. NOTE: THE SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE IS ON
A PRECIPITOUS INCREASE. AT ONE SCHOOL THAT THE TEAM VISITED

IN MUZARABANI DISTRICT (CHIWESHE), WE WERE INFORMED THAT ABSENTEEISM HAD INCREASED TO FIFTY PERCENT OF ENROLLMENT. "SOME KIDS HAD NOT EATEN AT ALL THAT DAY. OTHERS HAD A CUP OF TEA FOR BREAKFAST AND NOTHING FOR LUNCH. SOME WERE SHOWING CLEAR SIGNS OF MALNUTRITION - WITH THEIR HAIR TURNING ORANGE AND THEIR LIMBS LIKE TWIGS." END NOTE.

¶19. WHEREVER FEASIBLE, FORTIFICATION OF STAPLE FOOD PROVIDED IS RECOMMENDED. PROPER NUTRITION (PROTEIN AND MICRONUTRIENTS) IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR HIV-POSITIVE PERSONS IN ORDER TO SLOW THE ONSET OF AIDS.

¶20. FURTHER TRAINING EFFORTS BY THE UN AGENCIES AND NGOS ARE NEEDED ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS SITUATIONS.

¶21. THE UN IS USING A GENERAL POPULATION FIGURE OF 13 MILLION PLUS FOR THIS PRESENT CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE. WHILE ESTIMATES VARY AS TO HOW MANY ZIMBABWEANS ARE OUTSIDE THE
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COUNTRY (IN ZAMBIA, THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, MOZAMBIQUE, BOTSWANA, UK AND NORTH AMERICA), THESE NUMBERS SHOULD BE FACTORED INTO OVERALL ASSESSMENT CALCULATIONS.
HALL

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